

Keeping Up...With Youth

by Pamela Swift

It Pays to Talk

You can buy Ralph Nader for \$2500 a night. Dick Gregory is cheaper. You can get him for \$1250. Dionne Warwick comes high at \$8000. Theodore Bikel costs \$3000. Abbie Hoffman asks for \$1200. Margaret Mead for half that amount.

These are just a few of the price tags attached to lecturers and entertainers on the college circuit.

Prices vary according to name, area, day of the week, demand, and the booking agencies, some of which take as much as 50 percent commission from lecture clients.

If your school plans to hire name talent, here are some guidelines:

Most prominent politicians charge \$1500 and up for a single talk.

Movement people speak for \$300 and up plus expenses.

Some Government officials will speak without fee.

Popular entertainers cost the most: They charge \$7500 and up for solo appearances, while some rock groups demand and get \$20,000 and up per night.

The price of a political speaker fluctuates in proportion to his ambition, need, and popularity.

Jack McNamara of the Student Activities Center, University of Southern California, reports that former Sen. Eugene McCarthy once rejected a bid to address the student body because the school couldn't afford his asking price of \$2500 plus expenses. Presidential hopeful Harold Hughes, however—he is the Democratic U.S. Senator from Iowa who is enormously popular with students—recently earned \$2500 for lecturing at USC. Former New York

\$2500 AND UP



RALPH NADER



JANE FONDA



EUGENE McCARTHY

Sen. Charles Goodell will hit the USC rostrum at \$1300 a lecture.

In many cases, politicians ask for fees not to replenish their personal bank accounts but to refill their campaign coffers.

According to Bob Lamb of the Movement Speakers Bureau in Washington, D.C., "the biggest money-makers in the movement are comedian Dick Gregory, attorney William Kunstler, Dr. Benjamin Spock, and actress Jane Fonda. Dr. Spock earns the largest individual fees along with Jane—\$2500 and up—but Dick Gregory probably grosses the most, because he often speaks twice a day at \$1250 per lecture, six days a week. The others don't speak that frequently."

"People in the movement," claims Lamb, "donate a large share of their college lecture earnings to various causes, the Chicago Conspiracy Legal Defense Fund, the Civil Liberties Defense Fund, and many different anti-war groups. There's a lot of talk about fabulous sums the movement people are raking in, but I'll tell you this—the Chicago Seven didn't

even come up with enough loot to cover their legal expenses, which admittedly were heavy."

Now that variety programs on television are relatively few, and nightclubs in large cities have folded, many entertainers, vocalists and comedians are working the college circuit. Entertainers charge the highest rates and pay their agents the standard commission of 10 percent for bookings. Lecture agents, on the other hand, demand whopping commissions which start at 25 percent of the take and work up from there.

The American Program Bureau in Boston, the largest college lecture brokerage in the country, takes a 30 percent commission off the top.

"We have 12 salesmen," explains Robert Walker, president of the APB, "who travel around the country making all the arrangements. In fact, we maintain our own travel bureau for the convenience of our clients. The people we represent like Ralph Nader and Julian Bond charge somewhere between \$2000-\$3000 for a college appearance, but they're easily worth it. They are

crowd-drawers, genuine box-office attractions, lecture stars in their own right."

The best way for an individual to break into the lecturing business is to write a book. The publishing house of Doubleday has organized a special author-lecture bureau which takes a 25 percent commission, and offers, among others, Kate Millett, author of "Sexual Politics," for \$1500 and expenses per lecture; Liz Carpenter, ex-press secretary to Lady Bird Johnson, for \$1000 per lecture; Hugh Downs and ex-Sen. Eugene McCarthy for \$2500 each; Commander Lloyd Bucher of Pueblo fame at \$1000 plus expenses, and novelist Monica Dickens for \$600 a lecture. These prices of course are subject to upward revision.

At such rates how much can the peripatetic speaker earn a year? Liz Carpenter was booked for 30 lectures last year. On her month-long tour of U.S. college campuses, Bernadette Devlin earned around \$75,000 by lecturing three and four times a day.

The hottest prospect in the lecturing business right now is Spiro Agnew. "Give me Spiro on the lecture circuit," declares Robert Walker of the American Program Bureau, "and I'll guarantee that guy a yearly gross of \$500,000."

For a politician like Agnew who once worked as an \$11-per-week insurance clerk and later as a grocery store checkout man at \$100 a week—half a million a year for giving out with the same lecture night after night would surely prove a balm for all the abrasive criticism leveled at him by the fourth estate.

\$1250-\$1500



DICK GREGORY



KATE MILLETT



CHARLES GOODELL

\$600-\$1000



LIZ CARPENTER



LLOYD BUCHER



MARGARET MEAD